

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11812

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CSCE, SHUM, UR
SUBJECT: JEWISH COMMUNITY IN TASHKENT

REF: MOSCOW A-100

1. IN CONVERSATION IN CONSULAR SECTION, A JEWISH EMI-GRANT DESCRIBED THE SITUATION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN TASHKENT. HE NOTED THAT JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE IS AT A VERY LOW EBB. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE AS MANY AS TEN SYNAGOGUES IN THE JEWISH REGION, ONLY ONE IS OFFICIALLY FUNCTIONING. (THE "WORKING" SYNAGOGUE IS LOCATED AT ULITSA SAGVAN 24.)
2. EMIGRANT ALSO NOTED THAT A VERY LARGE PERCENTAGE ("ALMOST ALL") OF THE JEWISH POPULATION HAS APPLIED FOR EXIT PERMISSION TO EITHER ISRAEL OR THE UNITED STATES. MANY HAVE NO RELATIVE ABROAD TO SEND THEM AN INVITATION (VYZOV), HOWEVER, AND THERE HAVE BEEN EFFORTS TO CONTACT HIAS TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INVITATIONS.
3. COMMENT: THE 1970 SOVIET CENSUS GIVES THE JEWISH POPULATION OF UZBEKISTAN AT 102,800. OF THESE, 9,259 HAVE EMIGRATED TO ISRAEL OR THE UNITED STATES BETWEEN 1968 AND 1977 (REFAIR). THE PERCENTAGE OF JEWISH EMI-

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GRANTS IS THE THIRD HIGHEST AMONG THE CONSTITUENT REPUB-
LICS OF THE USSR, EXCEPTING ONLY MOLDAVIA (14 PERCENT)
AND GEORGIA (5 PERCENT). THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF TASH-
KENT IS ONE OF THE OLDEST IN CENTRAL ASIA, AND ITS
SMALL POPULATION SPEAKS A DIALECT WHICH IS PART HEBREW
AND PART UZBEK. TO THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, SUCH AN
UNASSIMILATED POPULATION, WITH A LONG AND INDEPENDENT

CULTURAL HISTORY, PROVIDED A PROBLEM EASILY SOLVED BY
LIBERALIZING THE EMIGRATION RULES OF THE LOCAL OVIR.
AS IN THE WESTERN UKRAINE, MOLDAVIA AND GEORGIA, WHERE
THE JEWISH POPULATION HAS NOT ASSIMILATED AND WHERE
(ESPECIALLY IN THE WESTERN UKRAINE AND MOLDAVIA) ANTI-
SEMITISM IS RAMPANT, THE OVIRS SEEM TO BE MUCH MORE
LIBERAL. MATLOCK

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